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ABSTRACT

This study is considered to represent an attempt to examine conditions which inhibit the education of many minority group college students, by pursuing three specific objectives. They are: (1) to identify common indicators of the lack of self-discipline among minority group college students and analyze them in terms of their nature and magnitude; (2) to provide an analysis of the self-discipline problems found in terms of their probable cause and effects on the students' adjustment to their total college experience, primarily from the perspective of minority group students themselves; and, (3) to recommend specific and practical suggestions that college might implement to help students who are handicapped by a lack of self-discipline to overcome it. The research was primarily conducted on the campuses of four colleges in New York State, two being located in New York City, and two in Western New York. Two groups of college personnel were direct contributors to the research. The first group included the minority undergraduate students whose comments, opinions, and interactions compose the greater part of this report. The second group included a small and select group of minority faculty and students who assisted on occasion in developing interviewing and recording instruments, and in planning and organizing other aspects of the study. (Author/JM)

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SELF-DISCIPLINE -- A COMMONLY IGNORED FACTOR IN THE EDUCATION OF MINORITY GROUP COLLEGE STUDENTS

(A thesis completed in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the M.A. Degree in English -- under the joint sponsorship of the English Department and The Office of Urban Affairs)

By

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February 26, 1974

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them talk about their educational goals, listening to their candor, and seeing their ability to ward off defeat were all an invaluable learning experience for me, even though I had at one time been a part of some of the experiences which they described.

Consuelo Byrd Taha
February 25, 1974

PART 1

INTRODUCTION

The great Civil Rights Revolution has come and gone. Many great changes have been left in its wake. Some of the changes have had a pronounced effect upon virtually every social institution in the United States. Many urban public schools that were racially segregated a dozen years ago are now racially integrated. Those that have not yet been integrated are apprehensive that some court will hand down a decision which will force them to do so. Many organizations which a decade ago were not hiring minority group persons[1] in professional and technical jobs are now actively recruiting these persons for such jobs. Today minority group persons are holding important elective and appointive positions in federal, state and local governments. Significantly, this particular instance of change is conspicuously reflected in southern states, where the separation of the black and white races was strictly required by law. The Civil Rights Revolution spawned the proud self-image which an increasing number of minorities everywhere are exhibiting today. Prior to the 1960's poor self-image among Blacks was one of the chief hindrances to civil rights progress. It was out of such acknowledgment that Stokely Carmichael generated the "Black is beautiful" slogan that gave a new impetus to the Civil Rights Revolution of the 1950's and 1960's.

One of the greatest civil rights changes is reflected in higher education. As recently as a decade ago, virtually all colleges

and universities, except the traditionally Negro colleges, effectively restricted and controlled the size of the enrollment of Blacks. In the parlance of the street, they were for all practical purposes "white turf." The shift from this white image to a black, brown, and white image began to take place in the middle 1960's. It was because of this shift and the circumstances that precipitated it that Blacks, for example, began enrolling in college at a greatly accelerated pace. Between 1964 and 1968 their nationwide enrollment increased by 85%, while at the same time the enrollment for all students increased by only 46%./[2]

In 1970, there were nearly one half million black students attending college nationally. This represented a doubling of their enrollment since 1964, and the preponderance of the increase was at colleges other than the approximately 100 traditionally black colleges and universities. In spite of this progress, the proportion of U.S. college students who are black remains below 12%, the proportion of Blacks in the college age population of the nation./[3]

The picture of this instance of progress is clearer as it is related to the experience at 29 State University of New York (SUNY) campuses. The University began keeping ethnic enrollment statistics in 1967. At that time there were 5,074 full-time minority undergraduates students attending all 29 units. This number represented 7 percent of SUNY's total full-time enrollment. By 1971 the enrollment of minority undergraduates had risen to 7,036 (5,234 Blacks, 1,768 Spanish-Surnamed Americans, and 250 Native American Indians). These minority students continued to comprise 7% of SUNY's total undergraduate enrollment of 106,206./[4] Their enrollment had increased by 44 percent over a six-year span.

The enrollment statistics for the State University of New York at Buffalo (SUNYAB) provides a clear picture of how the concept of equal educational opportunity for minorities has been applied at the largest SUNY campus. By the Fall of 1968, the total full-time minority undergraduate enrollment at SUNYAB stood at 589 (402 Blacks,

89 American Indians, 98 Spanish-American surnamed), or 5% of the total full-time undergraduate enrollment of 11,135./[5] By the Fall semester of 1973, the number of minority students attending the University on a full-time basis had risen to 1,424, or 11% of the total undergraduate enrollment of 12,496. One thousand, two hundred and seventeen (1,217) of these minority students were Blacks, 150 were Spanish-surnamed, and 57 were American Indians./[6]

It should be understood that prior to 1968 Blacks and other minorities were not altogether prevented from enrolling as undergraduates in the traditionally white colleges. A few Blacks have attended many of these colleges prior to the 1960's. However, these few were usually exceptional in that they had good scholastic records and usually from middle-class backgrounds. The other exceptions were the black males, who were admitted because they possessed outstanding athletic ability. Moorman described the most common circumstances which generally dictated whether the black student would attend a good college other than a black college prior to 1960. Curiously, these circumstances have been generally ignored by the scholars who have prolifically written about the educational experiences of Blacks. In describing one, Moorman wrote:

> "Blacks with above average scholastic records in college preparatory curricula have had very little difficulty getting into college. But up to the 1960's, an astonishingly few who attended high schools in the North and West were enrolled in the college preparatory curriculum...
>
> Blacks were mostly channeled into the general curriculum. This curriculum generally consisted of a hodge-podge of courses that did not qualify a student for college admission on the basis of the traditional standards. Volumes can be written about the rationalizations that many white high school counselors used to corral Blacks, as well as other minorities, into this curriculum. Volumes can also be written about the wasted intelligence and manpower that have resulted from this practice."/7

What Moorman did not say is that counselors in Northern and Western highschools in effect protected the colleges from even having to make a decision about admitting Blacks; they made it impossible for the

average Black to meet the standard course requirements for admission to a reputable college by herding them into non college curricula.

In describing the other common circumstance which dictated whether the Black attended a good northern or western college, Moorman stated:

> "For a long time, Black males with outstanding athletic abilities have been admitted to colleges, regardless of their high school records and regardless of the curriculum in which they were enrolled. Credit for their "breaks" mainly goes to coaches and athletic-minded alumni. Some of these 'special students' received the very best tutorial help in order to ensure the retention of their eligibility to participate in sports. Some did not (receive much in the way of tutorial help), but still managed to graduate. Any good research will show that most of the latter got an inferior college education."/8

In 1968, the circumstances markedly changed. That was the year in which the enrollment of Blacks in traditionally white colleges sharply rose. This sharp increase did not happen as the result of any normal evolutionary development in race relations; it was made to happen by a series of great social and political forces. These forces set the 1960's apart as one of the greatest eras of social development in the entire history of Black people in the United States. Corbett and Levine explained these forces as follows:

> "This dramatic shift in enrollment of minority students is due to several social and political forces of the 1960's: The insistent demands of the Civil Rights movement for white universities and other educational institutions to afford Blacks equal and sometimes preferential opportunities to receive an education; similar insistent demands by white students and liberal college professors who mounted and maintained the great student movement for peace and social justice in the late 1960's; and thefederal government's intervention, which not only mandated equal educational opportunities for non-whites, but also provided financial assistance for them. As a result of this financing the EOP

> (Equal Opportunity Program) came into existence. These programs provided higher educational opportunities for high school graduates who could not qualify academically through traditional college entrance guidelines, and who could not afford the educational expense."/9

Responding to the impact of these social and political forces, colleges and universities across the land made firm commitments to educate persons who had been traditionally denied the chance for a college education because of educational and economic disadvantages. This kind of commitment was made by Chancellor Samuel Gould of SUNY, who stated:

> "The bringing of so-called high risk students to the campus calls for imaginative shifts in the educational program.... In short, a campus commitment to serve the deprived student involves not only bringing him to the campus, but also sensitively and sympathetically assisting him once he has arrived."/10

A similar commitment was made by other educational leaders. However, little did they realize at the time that the traditionally white colleges would be markedly unprepared to deal with the new and complex problems the EOP (Equal Opportunity Program) students would bring to the campuses. It was not taken into consideration how strongly colleges would resist making the necessary changes in order to accommodate these students and their special problems. A black educator, Dr. Albert Berrian, who anticipated this difficulty, wrote:

> "Viable programs of a developmental nature have been difficult to mount because of an unwillingness in official educational circles to come to grip with the socioeconomic factors underlying the total educational process. Since educational institutions are structured in a way that causes them to reflect the general society, it is nearly impossible to use these institutions to get at the effects of environmental programs for special groups."/11

Equal opportunity programs have now been in existence for over five years. Some of the students who were among the first group to matriculate through the programs graduated in the class of 1972. Some are working, and others are in graduate school, but many have dropped out or were terminated because of their inability to adjust to the rigors of college life. Some are still pursuing their baccalaureate degree.

Since the initial enrollment of the EOP students, numerous books, articles and reports have been written on the subject of educating minority college students. Each has had a common purpose of seeking to shed light on the peculiar problems that disadvantaged students face in trying to get a college education. Some of these writings have focused upon the black experience broadly. However, most have concentrated upon narrower themes, such as compensatory and remedial education, cultural isolation, financial aid, counseling, social integration and exclusion, etc. Noticeably missing has been an aspect of education which deals with the student's behavioral preparedness for his role as a college student. This aspect is referred to as self-discipline. It takes into account the student's ability to train himself or herself to conform to a prescribed and orderly pattern of behavior in order to complete successfully his academic goals.

The concept of self-discipline is alluded to in many studies, articles and reports about black and other minority group students in higher education. However, it has not been addressed in any concentrated manner. Such an omission might be explained on the basis that the concept did not rank high in the array of problems which seem more

important to the minority group students, such as financial aid, discrimination, social relationships, etc. Of course, considering the newness of EOP, there is always the chance that the concept was not thought of, or that it was thought to be adequately covered under the concept of motivation. Whatever the reason, it is a fact that the literature does not address this concept as a single concern. An attempt to weigh it as a viable factor in the education of minority group college students is what this study is all about.

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

The whole idea of this study rests on two basic assumptions that emerged from serious reflections upon my personal experiences as a minority college student, upon my intimate associations with other minority students, and upon countless conversations on the black experience with minority group faculty and other leaders. This first assumption is: Not only do many minority group college students fail to perform up to their abilities because of problems arising from their minority status in predominantly white institutions, but a significant number fail because they have not been helped to develop the basic behavioral rudiments for survival in college. The second assumption is: The special orientation, counseling, and compensatory instruction currently being provided many educationally disadvantaged students are neither special nor adequate enough to help these students to develop the basic behavioral preparedness they need to successfully cope with college life.

Objectives

In the light of foregoing assumptions and the factors previously discussed, this study represents an attempt to shed additional light on conditions which inhibit the education of many minority group college students by pursuing two specific objectives. They are as follows:

1. To identify common indicators of the lack of self-discipline among minority group college students and analyze them in terms of their nature and magnitude.

2. To provide a frank analysis of the self-discipline problems found, in terms of their probable cause and effects on the students' adjustment to their total college experience, primarily from the perspective of minority group students, themselves.

3. To recommend specific and practical suggestions that colleges might implement helping students who are handicapped by a lack of self-discipline to overcome it.

Scope and Method

The research was primarily conducted on the campuses of four colleges in New York State. Two are located in New York City, and two are located in Western New York.

Two groups of college personnel were direct contributors to the research. The first group included the minority undergraduate students whose comments, opinions and interactions comprise the greater part of this report. The second group included a small and select group of minority faculty and students whom I called on from time to time to assist me in developing interviewing and recording instruments, and in planning and organizing other aspects of the study.

Three research techniques were primarily used in collecting the

data. They were as follows: (1) individual interviews; (2) participation-observation activities in formal group situations; and (3) informal "rap" sessions at popular campus hangouts, in homes, and at social events in the community. In regard to the latter two techniques, the basic plan followed was for me to meld into groups and, at strategic times, seek to channel the discussion toward issues and concerns that were pertinent to the study. Though more time-consuming than traditional information-gathering techniques (e.g. individual interviews, respondents completing prepared questionnaires, etc.), these two procedures proved effective in that they kept the discussions relaxed and uninhibited. As the result, they produced some very candid, open, and detailed responses.

The research was organized and conducted in three phases. First, there was the Planning Phase. In this phase, I spent three weeks (that is, after the research design had been fully developed) talking soul-to-soul/[12] with 21 minority undergraduates (EOP and non EOP students), graduate students and minority faculty. The purpose of these talks was to get ideas and opinions about what they considered to be the best indicators of self-discipline. These talks resulted in an initial list of 13 indicators. With the help of five students (two undergraduate and three graduate) and one faculty advisor, the list was reduced to five by rating each of the initial 13 indicators against three criteria. They were: (1) Those that best reflect the behavior patterns of most minority group students; (2) those that can be definitely pinpointed and evaluated; and (3) those that reflect problems which might be corrected if serious and intensive efforts were made. By using a scoring system, five of the indicators were found to meet all of the criteria. They are identified and explained in Part II.

The second phase of the research was the Data Collecting Phase. It was initiated by developing forms which would enable me to collect data in an orderly fashion. Two forms were developed. One provided for recording the individual responses that came out of the various participation-observation activities, and the other was a questionnaire for use in conducting individual interviews. Both forms appear in the Appendix. Prior to starting this phase, I tested the participation-observation report form by conducting a "dry run" in a class that was involved in the research. I sat in a class, and recorded what I observed as called for. I also tested the questionnaire by interviewing three minority group students who were not among those selected for the final interviews. The weaknesses in the original drafts of both data-collecting instruments were eliminated, and the instruments were accordingly revised.

Selecting the participating students and getting the necessary cooperation constituted another aspect of the Data Collecting Phase. In selecting the students, I identified four courses at an institution in Western New York in which one-third or more of the students enrolled were minorities. I obtained the permission of the instructors to sit in the classes, excluding one, on an auditing basis. One course was in English, in which 6 of the 10 students enrolled were minorities. One was a leadership development workshop, in which all eight of the students were minorities. One was a Black Studies course, in which 5 of the 15 students enrolled were observed, and one was an English course in which 25 minority students (out of a total enrollment of 72 students) were observed. In all, I participated in a total of 37 classes over a period of five weeks.

Also in the Data Collecting Phase arrangements were made to collect information through individual interviews. They were conducted at all four colleges involved in the research. The activity at the two in Western New York extended over a period equivalent to 11 full days. At the two in New York City it extended over a period of four full days. At each of these colleges I participated in formal discussions, informal "rap" sessions, interviewed individual students, and talked with minority faculty members and program administrators. When this activity was completed, information had been obtained from a total of 152 students. The selection of these students for the interviews did not follow any strict selection procedure. I simply stopped them on the campus, in hallways, in dining areas, etc., and explained my interest. Those willing, which included most of those I stopped, were interviewed.

The third and final phase was the Analysis and Presentation Phase. The activities included the tabulation of the data, analyses of the findings, presentation of the findings, and development of practical suggestions which hopefully could be productively used to eliminate the problem of lack of self-descipline among minority students.

The entire study took 13 months to complete. It began in January, 1973 with what was expected to be only a one-semester project. However, the lengthy nature of the group interviews and the necessity for recording voluminous responses and notes, along with painstaking tabulations and writing the final report, caused the project to extend over more than double the time that had been planned.

LIMITATIONS

There is much more research needed to be done before we can say

we have an accurate grasp of the question of self-discipline as it applies to minority group students in higher education. However, regardless of any limitation that might be found in this study, I do feel that it has three very strong values. First, it will certainly suggest areas of additional research that ought to be conducted. Secondly, it might suggest some greatly needed new techniques for researching minorities. Finally, it may provide some practical suggestions that colleges can implement now to help minority students to develop the self-ddscipline they need in order to succeed in their college studies.

PART II

INDICATORS AND ASSESSMENTS

Before any attempt is made to assess the degree to which good self-discipline is displayed by the students in this study, it seems necessary to describe who the EOP students are. In addition, it seems appropriate to provide a clearer definition of the concept of self-discipline. In regard to the former, Moorman accurately portrayed the vast majority of these students in the following profile:

> "At colleges and universities throughout the United States, especially those located in or near cities, there are some strange faces. These faces belong to a new class of students who as late as 1966 were almost never seen on a campus--even in the "free" North and West.
>
> "Who are these strangers? What do they look like? What makes them different?
>
> "They are mostly Black. They are also Puerto Rican, Mexican-American and American Indian. They are all citizens of the United States.
>
> "They are male or female, and their ages range from 17 to 45.
>
> "They are single or married, separated or divorced, have no dependents or have one or more dependents. Often though, they are dependent, themselves. The American system has made them so.
>
> "Most all of them come from the cruel ghetto, barrio or reservation where poverty, discrimination and prejudice are the harsh realities of everyday existence; where

hopelessness reigns; where equality and justice are mere slogans; where a sense of nobodiness is deeply ingrained in the human mind.

"Occasionally, they live outside the ghetto, barrio or reservation, but they still have not escaped the clutching snares of poverty and racism.

"Some are very intelligent. Some have just ordinary intelligence. Whatever their intelligence level is, one can be sure of one thing--it is dreadfully underdeveloped. Wasted.

"Most of them have high school diplomas. A few do not, but it really makes no difference, for nearly all have received an inferior education.

"Most have a remarkable ability to survive under the most inhumane pressures -- to beat a vicious system that cripples and emasculates. Sometimes the pressures are too great for some to bear, and they fall by the wayside.

"They are bitter and show it, bitter and hide it. They are militant and easy-going, too. They are lonely and feel rejected. Sometimes they, themselves, reject. They are 'turned on' and 'turned off', too.

"They are confused and frustrated. Yet, they keep on hoping, struggling, appealing, demanding the chance to be somebody."/13

Virtually all of these students carry the "disadvantaged' label. It is appropriate to explain what the label means from the perspective of a black scholar, Dr. James A. Moss, who has extensively studied the problems of minority group students in higher education. Addressing himself to the question of what it means to be disadvantaged in America, he wrote:

"I think first of all it means bearing some kind of visible symbol of stigma...Being 'disadvantaged' means BEING dependent. We are asked to be dependent upon others for our livelihood, for the quality of education we receive, and for the social, physical, and cultural amenities that comprise the environment in which we live. We are dependent upon others for being seen and for the projection of us that others introduce into all forms of the mass media. We are dependent upon others for the judgment that we make of ourselves and for the value that is ascribed to us in

> society's ordering and ranking of us in its priorities. Being disadvantaged means being vulnerable, hurt, fearful of rejection and often being declared surplus as a human commodity."/[14]

Churchill provided some insight into the importance of self-discipline as a concept that has to be considered in any concern about the black man's struggle for freedom, which involves the opportunity to get an education the same as any other American. He wrote:

> "...True freedom is the total submersion in, and willing subjection to, the TRUTH...Hence freedom and system--order, arrangment, discipline -- are inseparable...There must be a sincere search for TRUTH first; discipline will be the natural outgrowth of the quest.
>
> Inherent in discipline is direction. Direction is a specific path of travel. Inherent in correct discipline is a goal. Discipline is the means by which a goal is achieved."/[15]

Churchill's comments, combined with those of Moorman, Berrian and Moss, lead us into an attempt to provide a clear and workable definition of the concept of self-discipline--only as it relates to minority group students in academia, and not anything else. It is a concept which must be taken into consideration due to the greater freedom of time a student has in college. It is a concept which recognizes that it is up to the student to plan and organize his or her study time, leisure time, and all other activities that are associated with academic life in whatever manner and to whatever degree he or she chooses. Such freedom of time in college can prove to be a pressing problem for the best student, let alone the educationally and economically deprived minority group student. Often the initial shock of unscheduled and restricted time can be too much of a temptation to procrastinate and "goof off." In light of these factors, *self-discipline, for the purpose of this study, is defined as the student's ability and will to train himself or herself to set specific educational goals, and conform to prescribed and orderly*

patterns of behavior in order to achieve successfully these goals.

Thus, the self-contained will, efforts, and the achievements of minority group college students to set a specific path of travel toward a specific goal is the broad measure of self-discipline. The degree to which it is exhibited by the students in this study will be seen in the section that follows. It is rated according to five indicators. They are (1) class attendance, (2) punctuality in attendance, (3) attentiveness in class, (4) preparedness for class and (5) note-taking habits. As previously mentioned, each of these indicators is strictly from the perspective of minority group students. Each is accordingly defined below.

> *Class attendance* simply refers to the student's showing up for class. It is probably that this was identified as an indicator because some college professors list class attendance as one of the criteria for grades.
>
> *Punctuality* refers to whether the student gets to class on time. Most professors encourage punctuality, but rarely do they penalize students for arriving late.
>
> *Attentiveness in class* refers to whether the student is listening to the instruction and whatever else is going on in the classroom. Some professors insist that students pay attention. They often call on students whom they feel are not paying attention.
>
> *Preparedness for class* is defined in terms of whether the student attended class with note-taking paraphernalia, such as pen or pencil, paper or notebook, prepared assignments, and any other materials that may be required for the instruction.
>
> *Note-taking habits* refer to whether the student habitually takes notes during lectures, group discussions and in preparing reading assignments.

The ratings of the students, who were observed in the classrooms, are presented in the tables 1 through 5. The tables should be examined with the understanding that no attempt was made to compare the minority group students observed with their white counterparts. The patterns of these students were only evaluated against the

definition that was established for each indicator by minority group students, themselves. For too long scholars have attempted to define minority group experiences by comparing them with white experiences. Their definitions have not taken into account the fact of the differences in cultural backgrounds, factors of discrimination and deprivations due to race, perceptions as to what a college is all about, and a host of other factors which cannot be compared.

The results of the observations for each indicator are shown in tables 1 and 5. The courses are identified as A, B, C, and D. The results were compiled by appropriately checking the Participation-Observation Form for each student who was observed. (See Form in the Appendix.) For example, in arriving at the results on Attendance indicator, at each class session the proper check mark was made on the individual student's Form to show whether he or she was present or absent. Similar procedures were applied in arriving at the results for the other four indicators. An analysis of the results of these procedures was made in an effort to make an assessment of the degree of self-discipline among the students in the study.

In order to insure that the tables are understood, it seems necessary to make a few additional explanatory comments about them. Course A was an under-graduate Black Studies course in which 5 students were observed during 12 one-hour class sessions. Course B was an undergraduate English course in which 25 students were observed during 9 one-hour class sessions. Course C was an undergraduate leadership development seminar in which 8 students were observed during eight two-hour sessions. Course D was another undergraduate English course. Six of the students enrolled in it

were observed over 8 one-hour sessions.

The breakdowns indicate that a total of 44 students were observed during the 37 class sessions. All the students were randomly selected for the study at the first session of each class. Although two students were absent from the first session of Course C, the entire eight enrolled, all minority group members, were nevertheless selected. The observations made during all 37 sessions were confined to the selected students.

Attendance Indicator

Table 1 shows that a total of 397 students were observed for attendance during 37 class sessions. It also shows that only 74 per cent, or approximately three-quarters, were present insofar as the overall picture is concerned. The poorest attendance record is reflected in

TABLE 1

Attendance Record of Minority Group Students Enrolled in Four Courses at a Higher Education Institution in Western New York

	Courses and Number of Students Observed Over 37 Class Sessions								Total	
Attendance	A	(%)	B	(%)	C	(%)	D	(%)	No.	(%)
Present	46	(77)	167	(74)	44	(69)	37	(77)	294	(74)
Absent	14	(23)	58	(26)	20	(31)	11	(23)	103	(26)
TOTAL	60	(100)	225	(100)	64	(100)	48	(100)	397	(100)

Course C; nearly one-third, or 31% of the students were absent for all class sessions. For the other three courses, the absence rate of the students was close to one-quarter. The attendance details for each course are shown in Table A-1 in the Appendix.

Punctuality Indicator

The recording of the results for this indicator, as well as for the others that follow, began 10 minutes after the time the class was scheduled to start. For example, if a class was scheduled for 10:00 A.M., the observation and recording started at 10:10 A.M. This decision was made because in all of my four years of undergraduate study at the institution where this phase of the study was conducted, hardly any of my classes started until 10 minutes after the scheduled starting time. However, this does not mean that students are short-changed, for some instructors extend the class hour in order to complete their answers to questions raised near the close of the hour, or to bring an activity to a logical end, or to give assignments for the next class, etc. This practice was very evident during this study.

By referring back to Table 1, it will be seen that a total of 294 students were present during the 37 class sessions. One hundred and eighty nine (189), or 64%, were late in getting to their classes for varying amounts of time. The overall punctuality record for each class is shown in Table 2. The figures in this table indicate that all 189 students were late an average (median) of 9.1 minutes. This means that one-half of them were late for more than 9.1 minutes, and one-half for less. What the table does not show is that during the 37 sessions only 36% of the 294 students were present when the observations began 10 minutes after the scheduled hour.

The median punctuality records for the individual courses are as follows: Course A, 8.1 minutes late; Course B, 11.0 minutes late; Course C, 9.6 minutes late; and Course D, 5.8 minutes late. Thus, the poorest record for punctuality is reflected in Course B, with Course C running second poorest.

TABLE 2

Punctuality Record of Minority Group Students Enrolled in Four Courses at a Higher Education Institution in Western New York

Minutes Late	Courses and Number of Students Present During the 37 Class Sessions				Total	
	A	B	C	D	No.	(&)
1 thru 5	14	29	11	10	64	(34)
6 thru 10	12	21	7	9	49	(26)
11 thru 15	10	18	8	0	36	(19)
16 thru 20	1	21	6	0	28	(15)
20 & over	1	11	0	0	12	(6)
TOTAL	38	100	32	19	189	(100)

A more detailed breakdown of the punctuality record for each course may be seen in Table A-2 in the Appendix. Two results stand out in this table. They are, first, a total of 32 students, or one-fifth, of the students in Course B were late for 16 minutes or more during the 8 sessions; and second, no student in Course D was late for more than 10 minutes.

Attentiveness Indicator

According to Table 3, only 56% of the 294 students who were present at the 37 class sessions seemed to be attentive during the full term of each session. By far the best record among the individual courses is reflected in Course C, where an overwhelming 91% of the students seemed attentive during the entire class periods. The rest seemed attentive most of the time. The lowest attention span is reflected in Course D, where 35%, or slightly more than one-third, seemed attentive "a little of the time," and another 32% seemed to be paying attention "about one-half of the time." This suggests

Table 3

Attentiveness (to Classroom Activities) of Minority Group Students Enrolled in Four Courses at a Higher Education Institution in Western New York

Attention Span	Courses and Number of Students Present During the 37 Class Sessions								Total	
	A	(%)	B	(%)	C	(%)	D	(%)	No.	(%)
For the full time	15	(32)	102	(61)	40	(91)	7	(19)	164	(56)
Most of the time	9	(20)	11	(6)	4	(9)	5	(14)	29	(10)
About half the time	9	(20)	28	(17)	0	(0)	12	(32)	49	(16)
Little of the time	13	(28)	26	(16)	0	(0)	13	(35)	52	(18)
TOTAL	46	(100)	167	(100)	44	(100)	37	(100)	294	(100)

that Class D students either had a very short attention span, or they were not very interested in their class activities. While the students in Course A and Course B reflected a higher attention span than those in Course D, they still reflected a high degree of inattentiveness. Greater details concerning this indicator are shown for each course in Table A-3 in the Appendix.

Preparedness Indicator

Table 4 shows that 53 percent, or slightly over one-half, of the 294 students were observed to have no paraphernalia in sight for taking notes during all of their class sessions. This does not mean that any individual student attended all classes without such paraphernalia, although a few consistently did so. It simply means that a given student or a number of given students might have had note-taking paraphernalia at some classes and not at others. It should be understood, however, that the students who attended class with the necessary note-taking paraphernalia seemed consistent in doing so. It should also be understood that there were contents, such as discussion of theories, definitions, and illustrations, that warranted some

note-taking by all of the students in all of the classes.

Table 4

Preparedness (for Classroom Activity) of Minority Group Students Enrolled in Four Courses at a Higher Education Institution in Western New York

Preparedness	Courses and Number of Students Present During the 37 Class Sessions								Total	
	A	(%)	B	(%)	C	(%)	D	(%)	No.	(%)
Had Note-Taking Paraphernalia	28	(61)	63	(38)	23	(52)	24	(65)	138	(47)
Had No Note-Taking Paraphernalia	18	(39)	104	(62)	21	(48)	13	(35)	156	(53)
TOTAL	46	(100)	167	(100)	44	(100)	37	(100)	294	(100)

Students in Courses B and C stand out in regard to having no paraphernalia at all or some of their classes. Yet, if regarded by themselves, the same experiences for Courses A and D would also stand out, for more than one-third of the students in each course had no note-taking paraphernalia at all or some of their classes. There is no regulation which requires any student to attend class prepared to take notes, but there is a tradition in academia which mandates such preparedness. It is simply a matter of recognizing that the vast majority of students in any college class cannot possibly retain all of the varied and often complex knowledge that is commonly dispensed over a full semester. To aid retention and absorption of the materials covered, classroom notes are always handy aids. Without the paraphernalia to take notes the student cannot equip himself or herself with such aids. (See Table A-4 in the Appendix for more details.)

Note-Taking Habit Indicator

Although 156 students were observed in classes without any note-taking

paraphernalia (refer to Table 4), it cannot be said, as previously mentioned, that any individual student never attended all of his or her classes without them. Consequently, Table 5 shows the note-taking habit for all 294 students who were observed during the 37 class sessions, whether they had note-taking paraphernalia or not at each session. It is obvious, however, that the students who never took notes during a session were those who attended classes without the necessary note-taking paraphernalia.

Table 5

Note-Taking Habits (In Classrooms) of Minority Group Students Enrolled in Four Courses at a Higher Education Institution in Western New York

Habit	Courses and Number of Students Present During the 37 Class Sessions								Total	
	A	(%)	B	(%)	C	(%)	D	(%)	No.	(%)
Took Notes Through-Out Class Period	14	(30)	29	(17)	8	(18)	8	(22)	59	(20)
Took Notes Most of the Time	2	(4)	13	(8)	5	(11)	7	(19)	27	(9)
Seldom Took Notes	10	(22)	21	(13)	10	(23)	9	(24)	50	(17)
Never Took Notes	20	(44)	104	(62)	21	(48)	13	(35)	158	(54)
TOTAL	46	(100)	167	(100)	44	(100)	37	(100)	294	(100)

Table 5 shows that over one-half (54%) of all the students observed never took any notes during all or some of their classes. By contrast, only one-fifth (20%) took notes throughout all or some of their class periods. The poor note-taking habits of the students are more evident when the figures for those who never took notes are combined with those who seldom took notes. It reaches an impressive 71%. It is interesting to note how closely the percentages for students in this table who never took notes parallel the percentages for the students who attended classes without any note-taking

paraphernalia in Table 4. The students' note-taking habits are shown in greater detail for each course in Table A-5 in the Appendix.

General Analysis and Rating

Many minority group students, especially those who matriculated in college through equal opportunity programs, do not achieve up to their intellectual ability. Hardly any scholar who has studied the academic performance of these students will disagree with this. Such underachievement will be especially reflected when these students are enrolled in basic foundation courses in the humanities, natural sciences, mathematics and social sciences. Their underachievement is frequently hidden, for they end up with top grades when, under poor guidance, they are allowed to load up with "Mickey Mouse" courses. Their underachievement is also concealed when they are enrolled in the basic foundation courses, and are given passing grades only because they show up for classes and do not cause any trouble. This frequently happens. In many instances, some instructors will admit minority students to their courses with the prejudgment that they are short on intellectual ability. Such a prejudgment is often based on no more than the fact that the student comes from a disadvantaged background. In some cases, it is based on the fact that the student has not done well on standardized test scores, or does not have a strong grade-point average from a reputable high school. Such prejudgments are usually very subtle. If the student is unfamiliar with this aspect of the "academic game," or is familiar but lacks the self-discipline and know-how to "beat the game," he or she ends up short-changed, or, in the parlance of the street, "getting the shaft" without knowing it. Of course, there are some who know that they are being short-changed, but feel helpless

to do anything about it.

In explaining one of the chief reasons for the underachievement of EOP students, Dr. Albert Berrian presented these conclusions:

> "Where inner city students are involved, we should not be overly concerned with academic performance as measured by standardized tests, but rather by signs of genius. That is, signs of leadership and the ability to participate ... The Problem they bring to colleges and universities is not that of being short on academic ability but that of having been poorly guided and poorly educated..."/16

In the light of these conclusions, the results in Tables 1 through 5 have to be cautiously evaluated, for any attempt to rate the level of self-discipline among minority group students must take into account some very crucial extenuations. They are: (1) the student's true genius or intellectual ability that standardized tests, because of cultural biases, may fail to reflect; (2) how well the students have been properly guided and educated to discipline themselves for difficult and demanding college studies; and (3) whether the student feels that he or she really belongs to the campus community.

In evaluating the preceding results in Tables 1 through 5, one would have to conclude that the level of self-discipline of the students observed falls short of the requirements for academic success. This conclusion is based on a 100% performance norm for each of the indicators. Ideally, the establishment of the perfect norm for minority group students who enter college with educational and related deficiencies is not realistic, although it may strike some people as being too stringent. The fact, however, is that self-discipline <u>is</u> a requirement for a sound college education, and it should never be compromised, especially for the disadvantaged minority group students who enter college already with two strikes against them for

reasons other than a handicap in reading, writing or mathematics. In addition to their need to seriously and strenuously apply themselves in trying to overcome their educational handicaps, these students need to apply themselves similarly in achieving the state of mind and habit patterns that are necessary to successfully overcome their deficiencies and move ahead. A 100 percent performance for each indicator, therefore, should ideally be the norm.

But realistically, it is too stringent a requirement to expect the disadvantaged minority group student, or any other student, to maintain a 100% academic performance level in college. There are too many legitimate reasons why this is impossible. Sickness is one. Various kinds of personal emergencies are another. In some instances, students are so "strung out" with anxieties, frustrations and personal responsibilities that they cannot concentrate, for example, on a class lecture. Perhaps these kinds of circumstances are taken into consideration by some college instructors who allow their students two or three unexcused absences during a semester.

In view of these factors, an 85% minimum performance norm was arbitrarily fixed for rating the level of self-discipline that disadvantaged minority group students must achieve as a basic requirement for productive college studies -- that is, for all of the indicators except punctuality. Taking the attendance indicator first, because it is basic, the 85% minimum performance norm was arrived at simply by allowing for two absences over 13 class sessions. This means that each student is allowed to miss 15 percent of the sessions. Thus, 85 percent becomes the norm not only for rating attendance, but also (again arbitrary) for the ratings against all of the other indicators except punctuality. It is a way of emphasizing the fact that education for the minority group student is serious business, and serious

and demanding standards must always apply, regardless of how stringent they may seem.

Chart A provides an analysis of how the students, overall, rate against the four indicators. The rating for the punctuality indicator is depicted in Chart B.

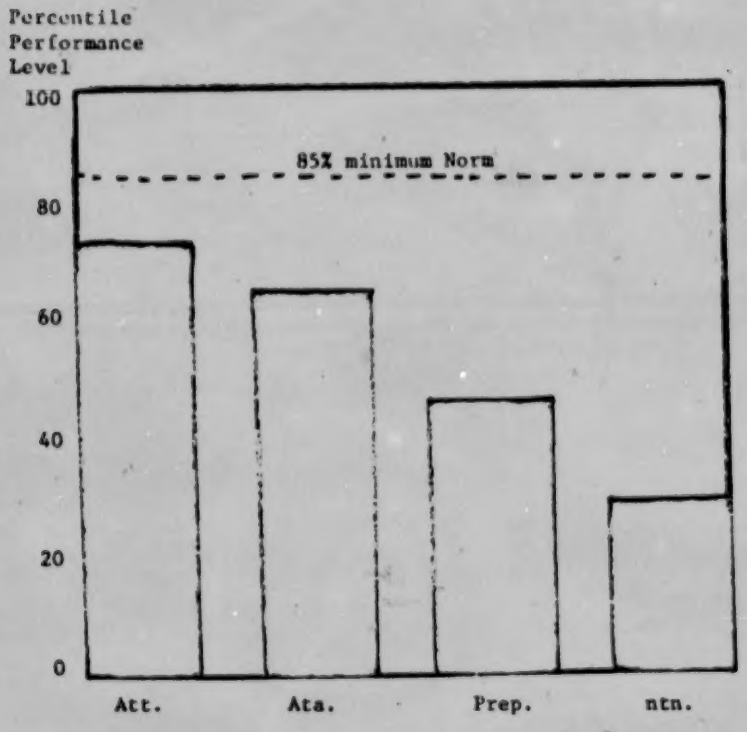
The horizontal broken line in Chart A represents the expected 85% performance norm. The chart shows that the students fall below the norm for each indicator, with what might be considered seriously low performance levels for the "Preparedness for Class" (47%) and the "Note-taking Habit" (29%) indicators. Their performance is a little better for the "Class Attendance" (74%) and the "Attentiveness in Class" (66%) indicators, but it is still below the minimum level.

Considering the fact that college instructors do not start their class activities until about 10 minutes after the hour it is scheduled to begin, every student should be expected to be present no later than 10 minutes after the scheduled hour. The reason for this arbitrary requirement is simple; if the disadvantaged minority group students is to make the fullest use of his or her educational opportunity, he or she has to be present when the class starts in order to get everything the instructor has to offer. Consequently, punctuality should not be compromised.

Chart B shows that the students' punctuality level falls considerably above the zero norm, which means zero minutes late. It has been previously shown that, overall, the students were 9.6 median minutes late. This suggests that one-half of the students are missing out on the knowledge that their instructors impart for 9.6 minutes or more, and one-half are missing out on that which is imparted for 9.6 minutes or less.

Again, caution is urged in evaluating the results that have been

Self-Discipline Level Exhibited by 44 Minority Group Students at a Higher Education Institution in Western New York--Against Four Indicators



Legend

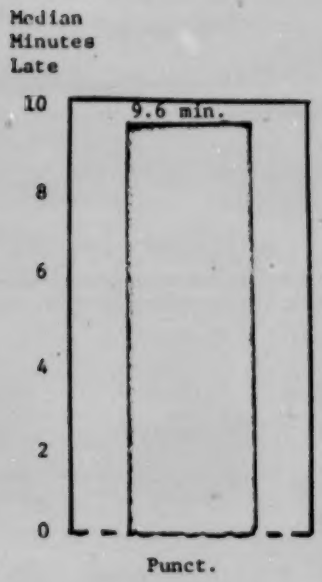
Att.... Attendance

Ata.... Attentiveness to classroom activities

Prep.... Preparedness for class

Ntn.... Note-taking habits

Self-Discipline Level Exhibited by 44 Minority Group Students at a Higher Education Institution in Western New York -- Against a Single Indicator.



Self-discipline Indicator

Legend

Punct.... Punctuality

-----.... Optimum Norm (10 minutes after the scheduled class hour.)

presented so far, mainly because some very crucial questions are left unanswered. For example, before reaching any definite conclusion, we would need to know exactly why a student was absent from class, or was habitually late, or took no notes in class, etc. But answers to these questions were not possible, due to the way in which the data in the preceding tables were collected. However, the investigator was able to make some observations that provided some clues. These observations are included in Part III. It is very likely that if all of the answers to these kinds of questions were known, they would support the previously stated assumptions upon which this study rest.

PART III

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS--FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF MINORITY GROUP STUDENTS

The evidence presented so far would ordinarily lead one to conclude that most minority group students lack the necessary self-discipline to achieve success in college. Some people would take this to mean that minority group students are innately lacking in self-discipline. Actually, to reach a conclusion, on the basis of limited evidence, would be doing these students a serious injustice, for no such conclusion should be reached without giving due consideration to some ever-present and real extenuating factors. The factors are external, and some are internal. They have a great deal of influence in shaping the habit patterns of virtually all students in academia, let along minority group students.

The extenuating factors, as they relate to minority group students, have been identified, analyzed and explained in countless books and articles by social scientists, educators and journalistic writers. The writings have provided a great deal of insight and understanding, and they are obviously based on personal experience and research. All too often, however, they reflect more the perspectives of the writers; perspectives of the students tend to get lost in erudite analysis and commentaries.

This part looks at these extenuating factors from the perspective of minority group students. The students identify their problems, give their candid views as to the causes of the problems, and give many opinions which indicate how the problems affect the level of self-discipline they exhibit in college. Their comments provide a good rationale for discouraging anyone from reaching any definite conclusion about level of self-discipline among minority group students until other kinds of related evidence is duly and seriously considered.

Attitudes and opinions were expressed by the students in response to the question on the prepared questionnaire which appears in the Appendix.

The four colleges are identified as "College N," "College O," "College R," and "College X." The decision not to identify them by their real names was reached in order to discourage any reader from forming any opinion about a specific college, or making any hasty comparison.

The number of students interviewed at each college and the manner in which they were interviewed are shown in Table 6. In regard to the latter, two interviewing methods were used. One was the traditional one-to-one method, which constituted 24 percent of all the interviews. The students interviewed were asked questions in the order they appeared on the questionnaire. Their responses were simultaneously recorded. Participation--observation was the other method used. It generally proceeded with the interviewer joining a small discussion or "rap session"/17 already in progress. These sessions usually took place at a campus hangout, but a few were at social gatherings off campus. After phasing into the group, the interviewer would determine the appropriate time to turn the "rap" to some aspect of the college experience. This is easily done, for minority

group students, like any other students, are always ready to talk about their college experiences. Once the "rap" became so focused, the interviewer would explain that she was conducting a study in the hope of coming up with some solutions to problems that minority group students are experiencing in college.

The interviewer invariably ended up leading the discussions, in the sense of raising pointed questions, and eliciting responses from each member of the group. The "rap" would continue until all of the questions on the questionnaire were covered, however, not necessarily in the order they appeared in the questionnaire. Some sessions lasted as long as three hours. In a few instances, the "rap" continued into a subsequent session. Where this happened, members of the group always returned. It seemed they were most eager to contribute their knowledge and experiences to the study. Members of the group were always perfectly willing for the interviewer to take notes during the sessions.

Table 6

Number and Types of Interviews Conducted with 152 Minority Group Students at Four New York State Colleges.

Institutions	Individual Interview Method	Group Interview Method		Total	
	No. of Students	No. of Groups	No. of Students	No. of Students	%
"College N"	20	12	65	85	(56)
"College O"	6	5	26	32	(21)
"College R"	5	3	15	20	(13)
"College X"	5	3	10	15	(10)
TOTAL	36	23	116	152	(100)

Table 6 also shows that 116, (76%) of the 152 students were interviewed in 23 groups. The remaining 24% of the students were interviewed individually. Slightly over one-half of the total number interviewed attended "College N." Here it might be helpful to explain that the interviews at "College N" took place over 32 days. (Two and sometimes three sessions were required to cover all the questions.) The interviews at "College O" extended over four days, and three full days were devoted to conducting all of the interviews at "College R" and "College X."

Financial Aid

Table 7 shows the methods by which the education of the students interviewed is financed. Fifty nine percent (59%) reported that they receive financial aid that is made available through the special E.O.P. of the State of New York. Ordinarily this would mean that only 59 percent of all the minority group students attending the four colleges receive E.O.P. financial aid. However, there are good reasons to believe that the percentage is much higher. Furthermore, it is a fact that some minority group students are reluctant to admit their E.O.P. status. This reluctance is discussed more fully later on in this part. It may partly explain why there were 11% of the students in this table who did not reveal how their education is financed.

Also according to Table 7, the education of a combined total of 28 students, or 18 percent, is financed through educational loans or private scholarships. In regard to the former, several of the students stated that theirs were governmental loans. The private scholarships were generally provided by foundations or community organizations which raised money specifically to help finance the education of minority groups.

Such scholarships are usually given on a competitive basis, with scholastic achievement or academic promise being one of the primary qualifications.

Table 7

Methods by which the Education of 152 Minority Group Students at Four New York State Colleges are Financed

Financing Method	Number of Students				Total	
	"College N"	"College O"	"College R"	"College X"	No. of Students	(%)
EOP Grant-in-Aid	50	20	11	8	89	(59)
Educational Loans	6	5	1	2	14	(9)
Private Scholarship	8	2	2	2	14	(9)
V.A. Grant-in-Aid	11	4	3	0	18	(12)
No Response	10	1	3	3	17	(11)
TOTAL	85	32	20	15	152	(100)

What is not shown in this table is an important revelation which came out of the discussion of financial aid: Nearly all of the students interviewed expressed a great amount of concern about the inadequacy of their grants-in-aid. As the result, the students were either working full-time or part-time, or were actively trying to find work. A significant number of these students indicated that they had to use many of the available welfare services, in order to cope with their financial problems. Chief among these services were food stamps and Medicaid. Many E.O.P. students had dependents, and complained about the lack of financial allocations for their dependents. The relevance of this information to self-discipline will be discussed later on in the report.

Attitude Toward College

Each student was asked how he or she generally felt about his or her experience as a college student. The responses are shown in Table 8.

Table 8

General Feeling of 152 Minority Group Students at Four New York State Colleges Toward Their Experiences as College Students

General Feeling	Number of Students								Total	
	"College N"	(%)	"College O"	(%)	"College R"	(%)	"College X"	(%)	No. of Students	(%)
Mostly Positive	28	(33)	12	(38)	6	(30)	10	(67)	56	(37)
Mostly Negative	25	(29)	16	(50)	8	(40)	1	(7)	50	(33)
Mixed	29	(34)	2	(6)	5	(25)	4	(26)	40	(26)
None Stated	3	(4)	2	(6)	1	(5)	0	(0)	6	(4)
	85	(100)	32	(100)	20	(100)	15	(100)	152	(100

Overall, 37 percent of the student expressed feelings toward their college experiences that were mostly positive, while about one-third expressed feelings that were mostly negative. Slightly over one-fifth had mixed feelings, that is to say, they said their experiences had been equally positive and negative. Interestingly, 50 percent of the students at "College O" expressed mostly negative feelings, as compared to the 38 percent who expressed feelings that were mostly negative. Similarly, more students at "College R" expressed negative feelings that positive ones. By contrast, an impressive majority (67%) at "College X" felt positively about their experiences as college students. It is most interesting that none expressed any negative feelings. A similar contrast is reflected in the responses for "College N,"

however, the differentials are nowhere as sharp.

In virtually every instance where negative feelings were expressed, the students made some reference to the racism as the cause. A significant number told of specific experiences which made them feel unwanted at their college. A significant number also said they did not feel they were "learning anything." These similar bases are discussed in greater detail in subsequent sections.

The positive feelings of the students at "College X" were generally explained in terms of satisfaction with the counseling, instructors and various actions by the college to make minority group students feel like they belong. A comment by one student was typical of these made by several "College X" students. He said:

> "When I walk in this place, they (instructors and administrators) let me know that we aren't there to play. They told me I had to 'dig,' and they let me know that people were standing by to help me if I couldn't 'swing it' ... This program is together."

Generally, the students who had mixed feelings gave explanations which indicated that their negative experiences tended to be balanced by positive ones. For example, several students at "College N" alleged that some of their white instructors were prejudiced toward black students. On the other hand, they cited instances in which their best mentors and instructors were white. Several students at "College O" felt that attending college was a waste of time. On the other hand, they felt that the college is bringing in more concerned instructors and administrators who really want to help minority group students.

A very large number of the students at all but "College X" felt that the instruction they were getting would not really be useful to them in the future. Some of these students referred to specific courses which

they considered to be useless. Others expressed great doubt that a college degree would be of any value in their efforts to get decent jobs. They based their doubt on the fact that specific personal friends and acquaintances had degrees, but could not find jobs. A very significant number of EOP students made comments which clearly indicated that, to them, the opportunity to attend college was a temporary form of pacification. In this regard, a student at "College R" made the following comments which were typical of most:

> "The 'man' lets Blacks go to college to get them off the streets ... anything to calm them down so they won't riot ... Don't worry about educating them; just let them sit there (in college) for four years."

Attitude Toward Learning

Table 9 reflects the feelings of the students about their learning experiences. Overall, 26 percent felt they learned all of the time. Another 22 percent felt they learned most of the time, thus giving a combined total of 58 who expressed favorable opinions about their learning experiences. It is significant that approximately one-third of the students felt they learned little (20%) or nothing at all (13%).

In examining the figures for the individual colleges, two findings stand out. The first lies in the great contrast between the number of students at "College X" who said they learned all the time and most of the time, and the corresponding number at the other three colleges. A combined total of sixty percent (60%) at "College X" expressed these favorable feelings, whereas between 41 and 45 percent felt similarly at"College N" (44%), "College O" (41%), and "College R" (45%).

The second finding that stands out in Table 9 is that only one student at "College X" had a negative evaluation of his or her learning

Table 9

How 152 Minority Group Students at Four New York State Colleges Felt About Their Learning Experiences

General Feeling	Number of Students								Total	
	"College N"	(%)	"College O"	(%)	"College R"	(%)	"College X"	(%)	No. of Students	(%)
Learned all the time	21	(25)	6	(19)	4	(20)	9	(60)	40	(26)
Learned most of the time	16	(19)	7	(22)	5	(25)	5	(33)	33	(22)
Learned sometimes	11	(13)	8	(25)	6	(30)	0	(0)	25	(17)
Learned little	21	(25)	7	(22)	2	(10)	1	(7)	31	(20)
Learned nothing	13	(15)	4	(12)	3	(15)	0	(0)	20	(13)
Other	3	(3)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	3	(2)
TOTAL	85	(100)	32	(100)	20	(100)	15	(100)	152	(100)

experience. By contrast, 40 percent of the students at "College N", 34 percent at "College O", and one-fourth of those at "College R" felt they learned little or nothing at all.

These findings show a close correlation with those in Table 8, which shows that "College X" students have more positive feelings about their college experiences than the students at the other three colleges. The question that naturally follows is the reason for this difference. Some of the answers were clearly evident in the comments that "College X" students made while explaining their feelings about college experiences in general. Several gave specific examples to illustrate how "College X" had successfully created the kind of organization that accommodates the special needs of its E.O.P. students. They described the harmony they felt with their instructors. They talked about their satisfaction with their counselors. They described the

administrators of E.O.P. with a great deal of warmth and respect, in terms such as: "Their heads are together," "they are people we can depend on," "they know what's happening," "they mean business," "they don't stand for a whole lot of jive." One student who was most vocal expressed the general feelings of the other students in her group when she said: "We've got some counselors and directors we are proud of and can look up to. They know their business, and know how to make us feel we can make it."

"College R" students seemed to express stronger negative feelings about their learning experiences than the students from the other colleges. More made comments which conveyed the impression that their instructors and E.O.P. administrators did not care whether they learned or not. Several "College N" students openly acknowledged their education was a "bust," and, interestingly, attributed it to the incompetency of counseling services as much as anything else. All but two students in a group of eight in one "rap session" were not sure who their counselors were.

Course Outlines of Syllabi

It is an established practice at colleges and universities that instructors furnish each student with a course outline or syllabus at the beginning of the semester. This practice seems to have been established out of a regard for the right of every student to know what can be expected from a course, and what is expected from the student. It stands to reason that if a student is informed in these respects, he or she is likely to be better prepared for understanding the type of discipline that is necessary for a course. In this context, an inquiry was made to determine the extent to which the students were accorded this right. The results are shown in Table 10.

Table 10

Extent to Which 152 Minority Group Students at Four New York State Colleges Received Syllabi for Their Courses

Received Syllabi	Number of Students								Total	
	"College N"	(%)	"College O"	(%)	"College R"	(%)	"College X"	(%)	No. of Students	(%)
For each course	12	(15)	4	(13)	4	(20)	8	(53)	29	(19)
For some courses	25	(29)	3	(9)	2	(10)	4	(27)	34	(22)
For few courses	20	(24)	9	(28)	5	(25)	0	(0)	34	(22)
For no courses	27	(32)	16	(50)	9	(45)	3	(20)	55	(36)
Total	85	(100)	32	(100)	20	(100)	15	(100)	152	( )

An overwhelming number of the students interviewed said they did not receive syllabi for all of their courses. This is no doubt the most significant revelation in Table 10. Looking at the combined totals, only 17 percent (less than one-fifth) received syllabi for each course. By contrast, over one-third reported that they received no syllabi. Nearly one-half (a combined total of 47%) received them for some and a few courses.

Considering the figures for the individual colleges, the students at "College X" appear to have been given a greater advantage in this regard. Over one-half received syllabi for each course, whereas no more than one-fifth at any of the other three colleges received them. It is striking that one-half of the students at "College O" and nearly one-half (45 percent) at "College R" said they received none.

In assuming that these statistics are representative, two inferences can be drawn from them. First of all, the right of all minority group students to know what a course is all about, in accordance with established traditions

in academia, does not appear to be assured. Secondly, by denying minority group students this right, colleges and universities are grossly remiss in their obligations to help them to achieve that level of self-discipline that is necessary for academic success. If the necessary self-discipline is lacking, it is highly unlikely that anyone will be able to cope successfully with the rigors and frustrations that are ever-present in the college experience. This is especially true in the case of those minority group students who have encountered many social and economic disadvantages before entering college, and those whose high school experiences have provided very little preparation for college studies.

Problems Identified

Usually whenever black students get together in any type of social gathering, their conversations invariably focus upon specific problems that individual members encounter in the classroom, in administrative offices or in non academic social relationships on campus. The same is true for other minority group students, especially Puerto Rican Americans. In this sense minority group students are generally no different from their white counterparts. However, there is one very pronounced exception: The problems talked about by minority group students are, in many instances, seen as being evidence of racist practices on campus. This deserves some serious consideration, for some of the experiences these students related would suggest that racism is very much alive at the colleges involved in this study. Furthermore, they would suggest a strong correlation between the problems that these students relate and the level of self-discipline they exhibit.

In this context it was deemed important to find out what the

students considered to be their most troublesome problems and whom they felt to be responsible for them. Consequently, each student was asked to name the biggest problem that he or she faced in trying to get a college education. No limit was placed on the number of problems they could name. Their responses are shown in Table 11, which shows a total of 14 problems. Altogether, they were mentioned 857 times.

For the purpose of analysis, the problems in Table 11 are classified under two headings: Institution Defects and Personal Assessments. Under Institutional Defects are the problems which the respondents viewed as having roots in the operating system of the colleges. Problems listed under Personal Assessment are those problems which the respondents viewed as being rooted in short-comings resulting from their past educational experiences. The classifications are as follows:

Institutional Defects	Personalsessment
Inadequate finances	Tough academic competition
Racist practices	Inability to understand system
Prejudiced instructors	Inability to maintain schedules
Prejudgment due to E.O.P. label	Constant pressures
Unavailability of needed help	Not learning much
Unfair grading practices	
Nothing or little to do	
Rejection	
Having to settle for less rigorous majors	

Institutional Defects

Prejudgment Due to E.O.P. Label

This was the most frequently mentioned problem in Table 11. Interestingly, it was also mentioned by an impressive number of respondents who were non E.O.P. students. Virtually all of the respondents made comments which indicated that they deeply resented the E.O.P. label, explaining that it caused them great embarrassment. An E.O.P. student at "College N"

Table 11

Biggest Problems Faced by Minority Group Students at Four New York State Colleges

Biggest Problem	Number of Times Mentioned				Total	
	"College N"	"College O"	"College R"	"College X"	No. of Probs.	(%)
Inadequate Finances	54	17	12	12	95	(11)
Tough academic competition	23	11	6	3	43	(5)
Unable to understand the college system	31	8	5	1	45	(5)
Inability to maintain schedules	28	12	7	3	50	(6)
Racist practices	52	24	16	2	94	(11)
Constant pressures in trying to keep up	29	9	5	4	47	(5)
Having to settle for less rigorous majors	25	10	10	1	46	(5)
Prejudiced instructor and administrator	51	13	14	4	82	(10)
Prejudged due to E.O.P. label	56	23	13	11	103	(12)
Unavailability of needed help	41	16	5	0	62	(7)
Unfair grading practices	35	4	7	2	48	(6)
Nothing or little to do	28	12	8	3	51	(6)
Not learning much	33	13	3	1	50	(6)
Rejection	24	9	7	1	41	(5)
TOTAL	510	181	118	48	857	(100)

expressed feelings that were typical of many of those expressed. He said:

> "I'm ashamed to let anybody know that I'm a so-called E.O.P. student... I had a teacher who found out, and threw it in my face right in class. That dude made all kinds of snide remarks about 'you special students' that made me feel like a social academic outcast."

The general feelings of non E.O.P. respondents were typified by the comments by a black female from "College N." She said:

> "We are stereotyped whether we are E.O.P. students or not. Most of them (faculty and white students) automatically assume that all minorities have lower class backgrounds... that we are academically deficient ... that all of us are less intelligent and have to be treated as special cases... Let's face it, if you are a member of a minority, you've got to carry the 'disadvantaged' or 'them' stigma. We are stigmatized from beginning to end."

Inadequate Finances

This was the second most frequently mentioned problem. The respondents who named it explained it in terms of insufficient money. Beyond that, many E.O.P. respondents said they met with great difficulty in trying to get administrators to review their financial needs, and give them honest answers about the financial aid picture. Several described how their financial aid was not adequate enough to support themselves and their dependents up to minimum standards. Several without dependents complained of the refusal by the financial administrators to consider the steady increase in the cost of living. Just about all said they were forced to take full-time or part-time jobs in order to make ends meet. Several admitted that having to work made it virtually impossible for them to keep up their studies. Several related experiences which suggested that their work obligations often took precedence over their education, even though they were carrying full academic loads.

Racist Practices

This was the third most frequently mentioned problem, although the respondents' descriptions made them seem very similar to most of the other problems mentioned. However, in order to reflect the respondents' expressed feelings, the problem was tabulated separately whenever the term "racist practice" or "racism" was specifically mentioned. Students at all four colleges openly alleged that "racist practices" were exemplified in all aspects of their college experiences --- in classrooms, in financial aid offices, in student activities, in the allocation of non E.O.P. assistantships, etc. Several stated that the E.O.P. label is a manifestation of racism. A "College X" student voiced the sentiment of his peers in one "rap session" with these comments:

> "Hanging the 'disadvantaged' or 'special' tag on us is a racist practice...I know white students who get all kinds of financial aid, but you never hear anybody calling them disadvantaged or special...The 'man' (college administrators) just wants to make sure you E.O.P. students are tagged properly so you can be kept in your place."

A "College O" respondent felt that racism was reflected at her college by the professors who never called on minority group students to recite, regardless of how much they raised their hands. "When I went to him to discuss the poor grade he gave me," she said, "he said that none of <u>you</u> students got good grades because <u>you</u> didn't recite in class."

Several "College N" students were sure that racism was the reason that only a few minority group instructors were employed at their college. A "College O" student attributed the "messed up" financial aid situation at her college to racism. Another "College N" student felt that racist practices were the main reason that black students were pushed into

supporting militant student organizations, even though they were often 'turned off' by the organizations' leadership. A student at "College R" had this to say on the subject:

> "... I go to get some information about a course I wanted to sign up for. The 'chick' sitting in the office saw my blackness before she even knew what I wanted...She just gave me some 'jive' that made me know she didn't intend to give me the information I wanted...Now whenever I have a problem in that office, I get somebody else to handle it for me."

One of the most interesting revelations from the interviews were the suggestions that many minority group students do not easily succumb to defeat over what they sincerely consider to be racist practices at their colleges. This was illustrated by the games they play to beat racism. These games were referred to as "defenses," and are played at three of the colleges. The one mentioned most frequently dealt with the "defense" that, according to several respondents, many minority group students use to avoid being given unfair grades by instructors whom they feel are prejudiced. From the comments made, there is apparently a pervasive feeling among minority group students that when a prejudiced teacher learn their names, their grades are then determined, and they are most likely to be poor or barely passing, regardless of the quality of work. A "defense" used at three colleges to counter this was explained in this way: Many minority group students are advised by their friends who are "in the know" to learn to remain "anonymous" or "invisible" (meaning unobtrusive and unostentatious), never ask questions or take part in the class discussion. If the instructor cannot associate a name with a black or Puerto Rican face, there is a strong chance that papers and exams turned in by them will be graded as liberally as those turned in by most white students. Because this game works only in large classes, many minority students are advised by their friends to only elect courses which have large enrollments.

According to a respondent in one session, some "brothers and sisters" guarantee for themselves fairness in grading by having a white friend get mid-term grades for them. The friend simply goes to the instructor, gives him or her the name of the minority student, and requests the grade. Not being able to identify the white student by name, the teacher gives the grade thinking it's the white student's. Students describing this game swear that it usually results in a fair final grade.

Each year at one of the colleges minority group students prepare a "white list." This is a list of instructors whom they judge to be prejudiced toward minorities. The list is circulated among the "in" students with the advice that they should avoid enrolling in the courses taught by instructors on the list. The name of one top-ranking professor of education was placed on the list after he was reported to have stated his opinion that "only middle class black students should be allowed in the college." Further, according to the report, the professor explained that the college did not have any problem with black students until the new E.O.P. group was let in. Whether this opinion had a racist basis or not, the student who heard it considered it to be proof of the racist attitude of the professor. He made the list.

Prejudiced Instructors and Administrators

This problem was mentioned 87 times. It was explained mostly in terms of offensive behavior or comments by individual instructors and administrators. Several respondents alleged that some of their instructors harbored animosity toward Blacks and other minorities strictly on the basis of their race. References to specific allegations of the prejudicial nature of instructors and administrators were a recurring commentary throughout the interviews. For example, a respondent from "College R" concluded that his psychology professor was prejudiced on this basis: "He spends a lot of time telling how inferior black people are, and he always looks right at me." Several "College

N" respondents were convinced that no Black or Spanish student received a fair grade from a particular professor because he disliked all members of these groups. A group of respondents from "College N" and "College R" said they could sense when an instructor 'hated' minority group people by the way he or she treated subjects that dealt with minorities.

Unavailability of Needed Help

The students who named this as one of their biggest problems mainly referred to the following kinds of situations: Their inability to get someone to help them to fully understand a paper assignment; their inability to get help with an emergency financial problem; and their inability to get some minority faculty members to talk with them about academic and personal problems. The latter was a prevalent complaint heard at all the colleges but "College X." Another had to do with the lack of good academic advisement and counseling. The respondents related various kinds of experiences which indicated that advisement and counseling amounted to no more than "passing the buck." Several complained that they often went to their advisors or counselors for emergency help only to be referred somewhere else. Very often they were again referred back to their counselors, some stated.

Unfair Grading Practices

A belief that minority group students are unfairly graded was mentioned 71 times, apart from the other problems discussed. This problem was further explained in terms of prejudiced instructors giving the type of tests on which minority group students show up the poorest. Essay and oral tests were mentioned. A general belief was expressed that by using such tests the instructor is able to fix arbitrary grading standards which may differ from test paper to test paper, with minority group students invariably receiving

lower grades.

Several of the complaining students felt that objective examination such as the multiple choice, is the best type to prevent the instructors' bias from coming into play. Several others felt that a combination of both might be used, provided the instructors gave minority students a chance to defend the questionable points they make in the essay exams. Some students felt that this was impossible inasmuch as their examination papers are never returned.

Several respondents admitted that they received very low grades on GRE (Graduate Record Examination) and LSAT (Law School Admission Tests) and were, therefore, rejected from admission to graduate school. They felt that these and similar examinations were developed for students who had had the best high school and college education.

Groups of respondents at "College N" and "College R" were convinced that some instructors gave poor grades to all black students who tried to relate an essay test question to the Black experience. A typical explanation was given by a "College R" student who made these comments:

> "You are 'dead' if you try to relate a test question to the black experience...Any Black student will tell you this... Some teachers are so up tight about the black thing that they automatically penalize you if you try to show how a theory does not work in the Black community.

Rejection

A feeling of "rejection" was mentioned 76 times as the biggest problem that faces minority group students. Student after student related incidents they had experienced both in the classroom and on campus which made them feel like they were outsiders, and were not wanted. These experiences were made in reference to specific problems already discussed in this section. An impressive number stated that they felt like intruders, invading the white

man's domain.

Nothing or Little to Do

The respondents who named this problem explained it in terms of the absence of enough social and culturally relevant activities on the campuses that interest most minority group students. Culturally relevent activities were described as black drama, Spanish music events, black and Spanish art and food, etc.

Personal Assessment

A significant number of the respondents exhibited a refreshing openness in naming problems that they felt to be attributable to minority group students, themselves. These problems are classified under five headings. As previously mentioned, they give some indication of how minority group students assess their own shortcomings, especially if the circumstances are right for making such disclosures. To publicly admit personal shortcoming is not always common among minority group students. Because of the long history of exposure to institutionalized racism, the common practice is for them to minimize or ignore their personal shortcomings and, instead, emphasize the external conditions which cause and perpetuate any shortcoming they might have. During the interviews, many of the students welcomed the opportunity to discuss what they, themselves, considered to be the shortcomings of minority group students. In one "rap session," a "College N" student put it this way:

> "Look, we've got to be honest and lay our own defects on the table...That's the only way we can get around the racist practices we are faced with every day on this campus...Take me, I'm not afraid to admit that I've got some real problems, but that doesn't mean I can't do the work."

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Academic Competition

"Tough academic competition" was mentioned 43 times as the biggest problem that minority group students faced. This problem was largely

explained in terms of the students' inability to compete academically with their white classmates. Whenever this explanation was given, it was usually explained further that most white students perform better academically because they are from middle class backgrounds, and have had a better pre-college education. The problem was also explained in terms of educational contents and methods that favor white middle class students. In this context, several of the respondents felt that most minority group students are trapped. They are compelled to go into classroom situations where it is impossible for them to compete. Some complained about their inability to get the kind of tutorial help that would enable them to keep up and better compete. Some felt that they could do better if they did not have to work in order to attend college.

An impressive number of the students interviewed explained that they dropped specific courses, such as mathematics and science, because their white classmates were too far advanced. The explanation of a "College X" student was typical of one that was commonly given at all four colleges. He said:

> "From the first day, the white 'cats' in my math class 'moved' (going at a rapid pace). They didn't have time to wait for me, so I just dropped the course...One day the teacher put some symbols on the board that I'd never seen before...I didn't want to be the only one to show that I didn't know what it meant...I know I can get that math, but I need a slower pace."

Another explanation was given by a "College N" student, who said:

> "The average white student is college-oriented from the time he starts high school. He is placed in college prep courses, and is basically prepared for the college courses that are needed for science majors, in contrast to the average E.O.P. student...The average E.O.P. students are herded in non-college courses where they are allowed to graduate without taking a whole lot of math, English or science...When we get to college, we have to compete with the college prep white students; and they don't have to compete with us."

Significantly, an impressive number of the respondents said that many of their instructors were graduate students. A few said they were sometimes taught by undergraduate students. Virtually all who mentioned this concern felt that this tended to intensify their problem of not being able to compete with their white counterparts. Some of the substitute teachers were described as being smart, but they tend to have little patience with slow minority group students, several of the respondents felt. Some of them further explained that it is common for a faculty instructor of a course to appear at the first class session, and then turn the class over to a student assistant.

Unfamiliarity with the System

This problem was mentioned 62 times as the biggest problem of minority group students. It was mostly explained in terms of the bureaucratic red tape the students encounter in moving through their college experiences. Many of the respondents said that the average minority group students do not know what to do or where to go in trying to solve academic and non-academic problems. Some felt that the greatest problem lies in trying to get accurate information about college services and procedures. Many explained that they were helplessly caught up in a "buck-passing" syndrome, and are unable to do much about it. They related example after example of being referred to several offices to take care of problems that could have been dealt with at the first office visited. A surprisingly large number of the respondents indicated their vagueness about crucial academic or academic-related

matters, such as course selection, establishing majors, the relationship between E.O.P. and the academic departments, handling grievances, etc. A few respondents at all of the colleges, except "College X," attributed their lack of understanding of the college system to the incompetency of their counselors and to an unavailability of the faculty advisors.

Inability to Maintain Schedules

The difficulty of maintaining demanding classroom schedules was specifically mentioned 50 times. It was largely explained in terms of the minority student's desire to regularly attend classes while at the same time keep up with a demanding job or personal obligation. Several respondents explained that they resided off campus, and often experienced considerable difficulty in getting to class on time. This was frequently due to transportation problems. Several admitted that their class and job schedules left little time for them to go to the library during the day. For various reasons, most found it difficult to go to the library in the evenings and on weekends. Some admitted that keeping pace with demanding academic schedules was a new experience.

Constant Pressure

The constant pressure of trying to keep up in college was specifically mentioned 47 times as the biggest problem that minority group students face. This problem was generally explained in terms of the mental anguish and frustration that minority group students feel as the result of the kinds of the problems that have been previously discussed. For example, many of the students

admitted that they were under great pressure in trying to survive under complex and often discouraging conditions in academia. A few made comments which indicated that their greatest problem lay in trying not to let their frustrations get them down. A large number of the pressures arose from concerns about inadequate financial aid. Beyond that, efforts to get "honest answers" and serious attention to complaints created constant pressures. Several respondents at all four colleges claimed that they are constantly being pressured to angrily demonstrate their displeasure over the inequities they face in college. Trying to resist this particular pressure was reported by many as one of their most difficult problems. They felt that the past had not produced any real results.

Not Learning Much

One of the most significant revelations that came out of the interviews was the extent to which the respondents equated a college education with the acquisition of specific skills that will assure them jobs. Many complained of not learning skills which would enable them to secure jobs. Interestingly an impressive number attributed this to their failure to take courses that concentrate on skill development. The following comments by a "College O" student were typical of those voiced by respondents at the other colleges. She said:

> "I am a senior, and all I will have to show for my top grades is a piece of paper which says I have a college degree...Employers are looking for specific skills... If I had to start all over, I would select nothing but courses that will get me ready for a specific job..."

Very few of the respondents explained the types of specific skills they had in mind.

Responsibility for Problems

Toward the end of both the individual and group interviews the students were asked to reflect on the problems they had named, and then classify each problem according to (1) those they honestly felt were attributable to the college administration and (2) those they honestly felt were attributable to the minority group students, themselves. No attempt was made to prompt the respondents. They were left to name any problem they chose and to make attributions as they saw fit. In addition, no limit was placed on the number of problems a respondent could name. As a result, some respondents named more than one.

Table 12 shows that the problems the respondants attributed to their college adminstrations are classified under 10 headings. They were mentioned a total of 664 times. On the whole, problems named in this table tend to vary somewhat from those named in the previous table. For example, some of the problems named in Table 12 were only referred to in the explanations of those named in Table 11. On the other hand, problems which were most frequently mentioned in Table 11 were not specifically mentioned in Table 12. For example, "inadequate financial aid" was one of the most frequently mentioned problems in Table 11. Yet most of the students only referred to it in explaining what they meant by "poor administrative practices" in Table 12. Some of the explanations of "unfair grading practices," in Table 11, were mentioned in terms of "poor showing on exams," in Table 12.

"Inability to understand the system," was specifically named in Table 11, but most of the explanations in Table 12 specifically referred to "buck-passing."

Table 12

Biggest Problem Minority Group Students at Four New York State Colleges Felt Were Caused by the College Administration

Biggest Problem	Number of Times Mentioned				Total	
	"College N"	"College O"	"College R"	"College X"	Times Mentioned	(%)
Poor showing on exams	33	12	8	4	57	(9)
Inhibiting departmental requirements	28	7	4	3	42	(6)
Poor instruction	44	16	11	3	74	(11)
Poor administrative practices	39	14	7	2	62	(9)
Racist Practices	37	16	10	5	68	(10)
Poor counseling	52	24	12	2	90	(14)
Derision of E.O.P. Students	56	22	14	9	101	(15)
Failure to learn skills	38	10	9	3	60	(9)
Buck passing practices	17	8	12	1	38	(6)
Rejection	45	13	11	3	72	(11)
Total	389	142	98	35	664	(100)

Some of the problems which the respondents attributed to their college administrations have been previously explained. Therefore, it is not necessary to repeat the explanations. Only those which have not been explained will receive attention in this section.

Inhibiting Departmental Requirements

The students who mentioned this problem generally explained it in terms of minority group students generally lacking the academic background for certain courses. Science, mathematics and language courses were frequently mentioned. Several respondents explained that many minority group students expect to sign up for majors, but are refused because they have not had the science or mathematics prerequisites. Some respondents explained that they had been refused admission to some departments because they have not had the language prerequisites. Most said they simply did not understand the requirements for signing up for majors. Several respondents felt that minority group students are steered into the social sciences and Black Studies because, as a "College N" student put it, "they (preferred departments) have a way of keeping us (E.O.P. students) out by setting up requirements they know we can't meet." Several of the respondents who expressed similar feelings believe they could pass mathematics and science courses if opportunities for remedial work were available to them in the departments. Some of the respondents felt that their educational goals were inhibited because they had not taken the Regency Examination. All of these and similar problems were attributed to subtle ways in which minority group students are prevented from enrolling in some departments.

Poor Counseling

"Poor Counseling" represented the second largest number of problems for which the respondent held their college administration responsible. By their comments, the students who mentioned it

expressed a good understanding of the importance of counseling. The vast majority felt that most of their counselors were incompetent, or lacked a genuine concern about the needs of the minority group students assigned to them. Virtually all of the respondents had an experience to relate as proof of these allegations. The following comments of a "College N" student were typical:

> "My so-called counselor could not even give me the right information to complete the application for a State Regents Scholarship...Every time I go to that office I can never get all the right answers to my questions..Now dig this: The last time she couldn't even tell me if I was eligible for a tuition waiver."

Another typical comment was made by a "College R" student. It was as follows:

> "My counselor didn't know the courses we are supposed to take to get in the engineering school... Here I've been following his advice for two years, and this year I found out that I did not have two required courses...I found out that 'cat' had never talked to any of the engineering teachers."

Poor Administrative Practices

The respondents who attributed their problems to "poor administrative practices" made reference to most of the specific experiences that have been previously discussed in the section explaining the problems named in Table 11. However, other explanations were given. They are especially revealing. For example, students from three of the colleges were adamant in their belief that minority group administrators were put in a "trick bag" (set up to fail) by top administrators. Several were convinced that the top administrators assumed that black administrators, for example, can handle all the problems of all

black students, even though they have little power and little or no control over the resources, such as finances, that are necessary for handling many of the problems. Some students were very critical of their college for the failure to hire minority group administrators in policy-making and top administrative positions such as president, vice-president, dean and chairman. The alleged failure of the colleges to allocate adequate resources for E.O.P. was also prevalently viewed as a poor administrative practice. Virtually all of the respondents attributed their constant frustration as being the result of this particular defect.

A few respondents from "College N" and "College O" reported that their E.O.P. directors change just about every year. This was not only regarded by them as proof of poor administrative practice, but also as proof that the administration cared very little about minority group students, especially if they were E.O.P. students.

Failure to Learn Skills

The respondents who named this problem expressed either a concern or fear that minority group students will graduate from college without having learned any real skills. The seriousness of their expressions was one of the interesting revelations that resulted from the interviews, for it indicated a dramatic change in the students' perception concerning the purpose of a college education. Their comments clearly suggested that the purpose is to prepare people for good jobs. Three years ago such expressions of concern were frequently heard in "rap sessions," but they

were in no way expressed with the same depth of passion that were heard in the interviews.

It was rare that a respondent explained in specific terms what he or she meant by skills. Any explanation given was usually very general. Most of the respondents merely defined skills in terms of knowing how to do the things that would assure them a good job. The respondents related experience after experience where personal acquaintances had graduated from college, and had no success in finding decent jobs. To most this meant jobs of a white collar variety. Virtually all of the respondents believed that the colleges were responsible for such lack of success. Their thinking tended to follow this logic: If minority group students learned a skill in college, they would not have any problem in finding jobs.

Several of the respondents viewed this problem as proof of their contentions that minority group students are being "ripped off" or are "getting the shaft." (These are popular slang expressions that connote getting the worst of treatment.) By the time the last of three lengthy sessions ended at "College N," a male senior had convinced the other participants that minority group students are getting "ripped off" in the sense that they are neither being taught the skills that will ensure them good jobs nor are they getting the kind of education that will get them admitted to graduate schools.

Having to Settle for Less

The respondents who named this problem referred to circumstances which compelled them to settle for the less rigorous majors. Some

explained that they had chosen majors in the social sciences in order to avoid majors which required extensive background in mathematics, natural sciences and foreign languages. Several further explained that if they had had a better pre-college education, they would have chosen majors in fields such as the natural sciences, engineering and pre medicine.

Some respondents admitted to avoiding majors which required a great deal of reading and language skills. Standard English in many subjects was viewed a great handicap for a number of students. A "College X" student expressed the feelings of several respondents at all the colleges as he made these comments:

> "The first thing I wanted to find out when I got here was which majors required a lot of math and science. If they did, then I knew they were off my list... When a teacher asked us to write a composition or term paper, I always made sure he didn't !take off' for spelling and grammar."

Several respondents expressed their intention to pursue more rigorous majors after doing some catching up. A few were explicit in this regard. They planned to do remedial work before enrolling in credit bearing courses, mostly in mathematics, science and the Languages. Meanwhile, to remain in college they intended to settle for majors which they felt they could manage.

Problems for Which Students Blame Themselves

As previously mentioned, an impressive number of students were extremely candid and open in attributing problems to what they viewed as their own deficiencies. The deficiencies they named are classified under seven headings in Table 13. While this table shows that the problems were mentioned a total of 336 times, it does not show that the question of self-blame produced

some very lengthy and detailed discussions in both the individual interviews and in the groups. It appeared that the respondents welcomed the opportunity to vent their views on the subject. However, it was obvious that they did so because they accepted the interviewer, and understood what she was seeking to accomplish. A "College O" student said he welcomed the chance to frankly talk about problems that minority groups cause themselves, and offered to "dig up more brothers and sisters" who would not mind being interviewed on the question. He said:

> "We (black students) need to stop blaming everything on the 'man'...Everybody knows he's the cause of most problems, but what we need to do is to start admitting our own 'hang ups' and do something about them."

Table 13

Biggest Problems Minority Group Students at Four New York State Colleges Felt Were Created by Minority Group Students, Themselves

Biggest Problem	Number of Times Mentioned				Total	
	"College N"	"College O"	"College R"	"College X"	Times Ment'd.	(%)
Student disunity	44	16	12	8	80	(20)
Lack of motivation to correct own shortcomings	29	12	2	4	47	(12)
Poor study habits	21	15	12	6	54	(13)
Preoccupation with non academic activities	40	18	3	5	66	(16)
Too much time spent "rapping"	42	14	10	7	73	(18)
Poor class attendance	38	2	9	4	53	(13)
Too easily defeated	12	2	0	1	15	(4)
Interested in the easy way out	8	3	6	0	17	(4)
TOTAL	234	82	54	35	405	(100)

Before discussing Table 13, one thing more should be said about the students' responses. Although they were made with a great deal of openness and candor, a noticeable amount of ambivalence was clearly evident. As previously stated, the respondents showed no hesitation in attributing problems to themselves; however, they continued to qualify these attributions by emphasizing their belief that minority group students, being the victims of institutionalized racism, are compelled to exhibit certain behavioral patterns that are often contrary to established norms. Respondent after respondent reiterated many of the problems and experiences that have been previously discussed. Many of the responses in Table 13 make it clear that they believe minority groups would not exhibit the "self-blame" problems if racism and all of its manifestations were not such a great force in their lives, even on their college campuses.

Student Disunity

Failure of minority group students to unite in efforts to solve their common problems was mentioned more than any other "self-blame" problem. This particular problem always generated heated discussions and a wide variety of solutions. The problem was explained in the following terms: Failure of the various minority student groups to support their individual campus organizations; poor organizational leadership, due to incompetency and self-serving interests of leaders; refusal of better prepared students to assume leadership roles; constant internal conflict over who should control the money; refusal of minority group students of different ethnic backgrounds to cooperate on common problems

and issues; tendency of the students to distrust members of their ethnic groups who participate in organizations largely composed of white students; tendency of leaders to depend upon fear tactics to maintain their leadership positions; and the inability of the minority student organizations to generate continuity in their problem-solving efforts.

An explanation of the "student disunity" problem was given by a "College O" student in these terms:

> "I used to go to those meetings, but they always ended up with a lot of rhetoric and b___s___. So I stopped going... There was too much disorganization...and too many personal conflicts to deal with...When there weren't conflicts, the meetings were nothing but a social gathering. Every other word was 'party'...There were too many meetings; nothing ever got done. I decided those meetings were a waste of my time."

A "College N" student explained the problem in these words:

> Everybody has his own little clique. Puerto Ricans have their little group, Blacks have theirs, and now the Indians have theirs...All of us talk about working together, but we are not...Every group has its 'thing' and all end up separated and weak...I'm disgusted with the whole thing, so I don't belong to any organization and don't plan to join...I go on campus to my classes, get a bit to eat, and split...I prefer to be by myself, because those people are very 'untogether'.

A "College R" student had this to say:

> "I used to have faith and high expectations in the (minority group student organization named), but no more...We used to have a lot of money, but nobody seems to know where it went. As soon as money gets into the game, brotherhood gets lost in the dust...The 'man' doesn't ever have to worry about us getting any power to solve our problems. All he has to do is hang up some dollars, and our minds are blown..."

Too Much Time Spent "Rapping".

This "self-blame" problem was mentioned the second highest number of times. The respondents naming it alleged that many minority group students spend most of their time in rap sessions, and too

little time on their studies. Their comments suggested that academic subjects are seldom discussed at the sessions.

Lack of Academic Motivation

This problem was explained in terms of most minority group students being unmotivated to correct their self-recognized academic shortcomings. The respondents explanations included the following kinds of alleged deficiencies: Failure to make full use of academic counselors and advisors; failure to speak up as much as necessary in class when discussion contents are not clear; lacking in the required initiative to act independently to overcome educational handicaps; and too often a display of lackadaisical attitudes toward their college education.

Poor Study Habits

The respondents who named this problem generally made comments which indicated their belief that minority group students with serious academic problems are not familiar with basic study skills. An impressive number of respondents stated that they have short concentration levels, and find it difficult to achieve higher levels. Many of the respondents explained that they were unfamiliar with the required skills to make full use of the library. Some found that studying at home was inhibited by noise and interruptions. Some admitted that they were slow readers, and very quickly tired of reading. One of the most interesting revelations was the number who felt they studied poorly because they had no one to study with, or had no one to turn to for help in preparing for a difficult assignment. It was also very interesting that in nearly all group interviews, the discussion focused on the best ways to study, and the differences

between studying in high school and college.

Too Easily Defeated

This problem was explained in terms of the tendency of some minority group students to give up too easily when faced with frustrations and disappointments. A "College N" student explained the problem in this way:

> "There are many times that we feel whipped. We try to hide it, but it's there...When you see black students loaded up with 'Mickey Mouse' courses, it's because we do not have the guts to fight to get in courses that really count... So, hell, we just don't bother...We know we aren't getting much education, but at least we have something to do.

Interested in the Easy Way Out

The respondents who named this problem generally felt that a few minority group students were in college just to have a good time. They referred to specific instances in which students spend more time in rap sessions than in classes; only enroll in courses in which everyone is passed; treat college like it is a community center--a place to play cards and engage in all types of recreational activities.

Preoccupation with Non-Academic Activities

In explaining this problem, the respondents referred to the following kinds of behavioral patterns: Students exhibiting more concern about sports, social events, outside jobs, student organizations, community activities that have little relation to academic concerns.

PART IV

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Institutions of higher education can do much better in preparing themselves to educate their minority group students. The results of this study would lead to that conclusion.

To begin such preparations, the institutions must first restate their commitments to the task. The commitments must be stated in terms that can be better evaluated.

After a restatement of commitment, these institutions must set out to develop the very realistic and specific mechanisms that will insure that equal educational opportunity will be practiced in every classroom, in every administrative office, and in every other aspect of campus life. They must also develop mechanisms that will put to rest any notion that minority group students with educational deficiencies are necessarily lacking in the intelligence to do college work.

Minority group students are matriculating in college in increasing numbers. Experience has shown that some possess outstanding degrees of intelligence. Some possess only average intelligence, but it is

enough to ensure their educational survival in college under the proper conditions. Some possess the intelligence, but are not college material. They may not have a deep enough interest or the stability required to endure the rigors of college studies. Such persons can be found in any race.

Regardless of whether or not minority group students possess the necessary level of intelligence, there is an overriding fact which describes many of them: Their academic development has been woefully neglected. Consequently, they not only matriculate in college with inhibiting educational deficiencies, but also matriculate without having some of the basic behavioral conditioning that sound college studies require. One of the basic is academic self-discipline, which is best begun early in elementary school.

The evidence presented in this study suggests that minority group college students generally function below the normative level of self-discipline. This is supported by the ratings of the students studied against five simple but fundamental indicators of self-discipline, each selected on the basis of minority group students' perception.

There is no evidence that even remotely suggests that lack of self-discipline is innate. Instead, there was a substantial amount of evidence which would lead one to conclude that the lack of self-discipline exhibited by the students in this study is the result of two sets of forces - those that have been engendered inside the student and those imposed by environmental conditions. None of these can be taken lightly.

Just opening up admissions to disadvantaged students is hardly

enough. Communication, geared to academic and behavioral deficiencies - must be devised to inform the students of what is expected of them and what they can expect. Administrators of programs designed to aid them in adjusting to college life must be carefully screened. So must counselors, tutors and all of the other staff members. Faculty and all of the other personnel who have any communication with these students must be carefully orientated so that any prejudicial attitude they may have cannot possibly effect these students, for most of them matriculate in college having already suffered great injustices.

These students can be groomed for good study habits. They can be taught to take notes in class and to utilize their notes in studying. Colleges can legislate attendance and punctuality requirement, and can do many other things to teach and nurture self-discipline. But all of these things must be done in a carefully planned and organized fashion.

It can not be too strongly emphasized that the students' allegations about the defects of their college systems, racial bias and other human relations infringements should be considered as fact, although they need not necessarily be. But the policies of the colleges should be so firm and forthright that an infringement would threaten any instructor's security. A human relations complaint bureau might be reassuring to the still insecure student.

What the minority group student needs desperately is indeed helpful to all students. So course syllabi, expert counseling and orientation, etc. should be instituted across the board. However, because of the disadvantages of many minority group students suffer,

the help given to them must be intensively applied.

It has long been traditional to expect college students to come to campus with study habits that are adequate to the task. However, it must be remembered that colleges broke with traditions when they instituted the Open Admissions Policy. It is now their responsibility to help the disadvantaged students admitted in every way possible. Helping with the development of academic self-discipline is part of that responsibility.

FOOTNOTES

1. For the purpose of this study, "minority groups refer American Blacks, Mexican-Americans, Puerto Rican-Americans, and Native American Indians.

2. Centra, J. A., Black Students at Predominantly White Colleges: A research Description, Princeton, New Jersey: Educational Testing Service, 1970.

3. Bayer, Alan E., The Black College Freshman: Characteristics and Recent Trends, Washington: American Council on Education (Office of Research) Vol. 7, No. 3, 1972.

4. U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare (Office of Civil Rights), Racial and Ethnic Enrollment Data from Institutions of Higher Education, Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, Fall, 1968, P. 70.

5. _____ Fall, 1970, P. 65.

6. Ibid.

7. Moorman, Deborah A., A Model Counseling Structure for Students Enrolled in Equal Opportunity Programs in Higher Education, Buffalo: Office of Urban Affairs, SUNYAB, 1971, P. 3.

8. Ibid, P. 4.

9. Corbett, F., and Levine, M., "University Involvement in the Community," Community Psychology Series: The University and the Urban Crisis, Ed. by Howard E. Mitchell, Behavioral Publications (In Press)

10. Quoted in Berrian, Albert H., "A Prologue to Sepcial Programs," Black Academy Review, Vol. 1, No. 2, Summer, 1970, P. 13.

11. Ibid., P. 6.

12. This is a popular expression among Blacks which connotes the highest degree of harmony and mutual understanding. These qualities have their roots in a common history of exclusion, oppression, as well as truimphs over adverse experiences. It expresses shared secrets regarding undefined attributes that are deep in the souls of black people -- something which virtually every Black feels but is only intellectually understood by white people. Soulness is that unknown which keeps black people surviving and struggling.

13. Moorman, op. cit., p. iii

14. Moss, James A. "Prigrams for the Disadvantaged: Perspectives and Problems," Black Academy Review, Vol. 1, No. 2, Summer, 1970, P. 17.

15. Churchville, John E., "The Question of Discipline," What Black Educators Are Saying, ed. by Nathan Wright, Jr., New York Hawthorn Books, 1970, P. 184.

16. Berrian, Albert H., op. cit., P.

17. This is a colloquialism, invented by Blacks, which refers to a free-flowing, unrestricted and unstructured small group discussion.

Other References

Berrian, Albert H., Toward Special Program Design (A [illegible]graph), State University of New York at Buffalo, August [illegible]70.

Breslaw, Elaine G., "Behaviorism in the Classroom," Change, Vol. 5, No. 3, April, 1973, pp. 52-55.

Pifer, Alan, The Higher Education of Blacks in the United States, (Reprint of the Alfred and Winifred Hoernle Memorial Lecture for 1973), Carnegie Corporation of New York.

APPENDIX

TABLE A-1

Attendance Record of Minority Group Students Enrolled in Four Courses at a Higher Education Institution in Western New York

Course A (5 students observed)

Class Sessions

Attendance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Present	5	5	4	5	3	2	3	4	5	2	4	4	46
Absent	0	0	1	0	2	3	2	1	0	3	1	1	14
													60

Course B (25 students observed)

Class Sessions

Attendance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
Present	25	23	17	15	19	13	15	21	19	167
Absent	0	2	8	10	6	12	10	4	6	58
										225

Course C (8 students observed)

Class Sessions

Attendance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Present	4	6	7	8	4	5	4	6	44
Absent	4	2	1	0	4	3	4	2	20
									64

Course D (6 students observed)

Class Sessions

Attendance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Present	6	5	4	3	4	6	4	5	37
Absent	0	1	2	3	2	0	2	1	11
									48

TABLE A-2

Punctuality Record of Minority Group Students Enrolled in Four Courses at a Higher Education Institution in Western New York

Course A (5 students observed)

Class Sessions

Minutes Late	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
1 - 5	1	0	0	3	1	0	1	2	1	1	1	1	14
6 - 10	2	2	1	1	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	2	12
11 - 15	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	10
16 - 20	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
20 & over	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
													38

Course B (25 students observed)

Class Sessions

Minutes Late	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
1 - 5	9	2	1	6	1	2	0	6	2	29
6 - 10	2	3	11	0	0	0	2	2	1	21
11 - 15	0	1	0	5	3	4	4	0	1	18
16 - 20	0	0	5	0	4	4	6	0	2	21
29 & over	0	0	0	4	3	0	0	4	0	11
										100

Course C (8 students observed)

Class Sessions

Minutes Late	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
1 - 5	1	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	11
6 - 10	1	1	2	2	0	0	1	0	7
11 - 15	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	3	8
16 - 20	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	0	6
									32

Course C (6 students observed)

Class Sessions

Minutes Late	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
1 - 5	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	10
6 - 10	1	0	0	0	1	2	2	3	9
									19

Table A-3

Attentiveness (to Classroom Activities) Record of Minority Group Students Enrolled in Four Courses at a Higher Education Institution in Wester New York

Course A (5 students observed)

	Class Sessions and No. of Students												
Attentiveness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total Students
Full Hour	2	1	1	3	1	1	0	1	1	2	1	1	15
Most of Time	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	9
About Half the Time	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	2	9
Little of the Time	1	2	2	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	2	2	13
													46

Course B (25 students observed)

	Class Sessions and No. of Students									
Attentiveness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total Students
Full Hour	19	11	8	13	5	9	10	18	9	102
Most of Time	1	0	3	0	2	0	0	2	3	11
About Half the Time	1	5	0	6	4	4	3	2	3	28
Little of the Time	1	3	3	2	5	3	4	1	4	26
										167

Course C (8 students observed)

	Class Sessions and No. of Students								
Attentiveness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total Students
Full Hour	4	5	6	8	3	5	4	5	40
Most of Time	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	4
About Half the Time	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Little of the Time	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
									44

Course D (6 students observed)

	Class Sessions and No. of Students								
Attentiveness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total Students
Full Hour	4	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	7
Most of Time	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	5
About Half the Time	1	3	0	2	1	2	1	2	12
Little of the Time	0	2	1	0	3	2	2	3	13
									37

TABLE A-4

Preparedness Record of Minority Group Students Enrolled in Four Courses at a Higher Education Institution in Western New York

Course A

Preparedness	Class Session 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Had Note-Taking Paraphernalia Available	3	2	3	2	1	1	1	4	3	2	3	3	28
Had No Note-Taking Paraphernalia Available	2	3	1	3	2	1	2	0	2	0	1	1	18 / 46

Course B

Preparedness	Class Session 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
Had Note-Taking Paraphernalia Available	8	9	8	11	5	2	3	10	7	63
Had No Note-Taking Paraphernalia	17	14	9	4	14	11	12	11	12	104 / 167

Course C

Preparedness	Class Session 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Had Note-Taking Paraphernalia Available	1	2	4	5	2	2	3	4	23
Had No Note-Taking Paraphernalia	3	4	3	3	2	3	1	2	21 / 44

Course D

Preparedness	Class Session 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Had Note-Taking Paraphernalia Available	4	2	3	2	2	4	3	4	24
Had No Note-Taking Paraphernalia	2	3	1	1	2	2	1	1	13 / 37

TABLE A-5

Note-Taking Habits of Minority Group Students Enrolled in Four Courses at a Higher Education Institution in Western New York

Course A

Class Session

Note-Taking Habit	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Throughout Lecture	2	2	1	2	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	2	14
Most of Time	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Seldom	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	2	1	0	2	1	10
Never	2	3	1	3	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	20
													46

Course B

Class Session

Note-Taking Habit	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
Throughout Lecture	4	6	7	3	1	2	2	4	2	29
Most of Time	2	1	0	4	3	0	0	1	1	13
Seldom	2	2	1	4	1	0	0	5	4	21
Never	17	14	9	4	14	11	12	11	12	104
										167

Course C

Class Session

Note-Taking Habit	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Throughout Lecture	0	1	2	2	0	1	1	1	8
Most of Time	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	5
Seldom	0	0	1	2	1	1	2	3	10
Never	3	4	3	3	2	3	1	2	21
									44

Course D

Class Session

Note-Taking Habit	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Throughout Lecture	3	1	2	1	0	0	0	1	8
Most of Time	0	0	1	0	1	2	1	2	7
Seldom	1	1	0	1	1	2	2	1	9
Never	2	3	1	1	2	2	1	1	13
									37

MINORITY GROUP STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECT

JANUARY, 1973

QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of Higher Education Institution_____

Check the appropriate situation below.

( ) One-to-one interview situation

( ) Group rap session. Number in group ___ Group Code ___

( ) Other _____

1. How is your college education financed?

   a. Through EOP ___ no.

   b. College Scholarship ___ no.

   c. V.A. ___ no.

   d. Other (write in) _____ ___ no.

2. How do you feel about college?

   ( ) Positive feeling

   ( ) Negative feeling

   ( ) Mixed

   ( ) Other (write in) _____

3. How do you feel about your college education in general?

   ( ) Learn something all the time

   ( ) Learn something most of the time

   ( ) Learn something sometime

   ( ) Learn little

   ( ) Learn nothing

   ( ) Other (write in) _____

   _____

4. Do you get an outline or syllabus from your courses?

( ) Get them for each course

( ) Get them for some

( ) Get them for only a few

( ) Do not get them at all

( ) Other (write in) _____

_____

5. What is the biggest problem(s) you face in college?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. What is the biggest problem, if any, that the college administration creates for minority group students?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. What is the biggest problem, if any, that minority group students create for themselves?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

MINORITY GROUP STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECT

JANUARY, 1973

Participation-Observation Form

Attendance

Was present each session. Yes ( ) No ( )

Was absent:

( ) 1 session ( ) 2 sessions
( ) 3 sessions ( ) more than 3 sessions
( ) _____

Punctuality

Was he or she present when class started: Yes ( ) No ( )

Entered the classroom:

( ) 1-5 minutes lates ( ) 5-10 minutes late
( ) 10-15 minutes late ( ) 10-2- minutes late
( ) Over 20 minutes late ( ) _____

Attentiveness

( ) Seemed interested full hour
( ) Seemed to be listening most of the time
( ) Seemed to be listening about half the time
( ) Seemed to be listening only a little of the time

Note-Taking Preparedness

( ) Had note-taking paraphernalia in sight
( ) No note-taking paraphernalia in sight
( ) _____

Note-Taking Habit

( ) Throughout lecture ( ) About half the time
( ) Most of the time ( ) Occasionally
( ) Seldom ( ) Never
( ) _____